

# P-8A in Line for SIGINT Upgrade

*By Richard Scott*

The US Navy has confirmed plans to configure its Boeing P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft with a signals intelligence (SIGINT) suite using equipment essentially common to that already equipping the Navy's Northrop Grumman MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial system (UAS) in its Multi-Intelligence (Multi-INT) configuration. The new SIGINT payload has been given the designation AN/ALQ-263.

In a notice of intent to limit sources notice posted in August, Naval Air Systems Command said that it planned to contract with Boeing's ArgonST subsidiary and with Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) to deliver the components comprising the AN/ALQ-263 P-8A ASW SIGINT payload, as they were the only sources able to satisfy its requirements. The two companies already supply a variant of the same SIGINT fit for the so-called Multi-Intelligence payload embodied in the Integrated Functional Capability 4 (IFC-4) standard MQ-4C Triton: ArgonST is the designer, developer and integrator of the Multi-Intelligence Sensor Development (MISD) Low Band Sensor Suite, while SNC holds the equivalent role for the MISD High Band Sensor Suite.

The SIGINT collection and analysis functionality delivered by P-8A and MQ-4C IFC-4 aircraft with MISD payloads is intended to replace the airborne SIGINT capability historically provided by the US Navy's EP-3E ARIES II squadrons, the last of which will stand down in 2025. P-8A aircraft will receive the AN/ALQ-263 P-8A ASW SIGINT payload as part of the Increment 3 Block 2 upgrade.